



Animal Fighting Fact Sheet

In Seattle, it is a crime to cause dogs or any other animals to fight each other. It is also illegal to train animals to fight. If convicted of this crime, a person can receive up to one year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Anatomy of a Dog Fight

The American Pit Bull Terrier is the most popular breed of dog used in dogfighting. Although the dogs average only 40-50 pounds, their jaws are extraordinarily muscular and capable of breaking an opponent's leg. On top of that, generations of selective breeding for maximum aggressiveness, combined with often cruel training methods and conditioning regimes that can involve the use of drugs and steroids, have resulted in dogs capable of inflicting terrible wounds or killing an opponent.

In a dogfight, two dogs are often placed in a pit enclosed by plywood walls or in a similar type of "arena" setting, where they must fight while encircled by a cheering crowd until one dog is too injured or exhausted to continue. The dogs, both the winner and the loser, usually suffer from multiple puncture wounds and deep lacerations and sometimes die as a result of the injuries sustained during the fight. Gambling, drugs and weapons are often present at dogfighting events.

Warning Signs of Serious Dog Fighting

- Fresh wounds, punctures, lacerations and serious infections.
- Multiple scars on the head, throat, legs and ears.
- Extreme, uncontrollable aggression toward other dogs.
- Presence of a "spring pole," which is a biting surface suspended from a bouncy device that encourages dogs to jump into the air and grab the biting surface in their jaws, or a treadmill outfitted with a harness or other device which keeps the animal on the equipment in a yard, coupled with chained dogs.
- Groups of people of all ages coming and going from a site (home, vacant lot, park) at all hours, some with pitbull-type dogs. Be especially suspicious if this is an abandoned property or a secluded area of a park.

What You Can Do To Help End Dog Fighting

- Call 911 if you see a dogfight in progress. If you suspect someone is using an animal for this purpose, call the Seattle Animal Shelter at (206) 386-PETS to report it. You may request confidentiality when filing your complaint.
- Always supervise your own animals and encourage your neighbors to do the same. Unattended pets can be stolen and used in dogfights. Cats, rabbits and smaller dogs are often abducted to serve as "bait" for large dogs in training.
- Contact your local police precinct station and start a neighborhood block watch.
- Teach children early that all living things deserve compassion. Explain that they should tell an adult immediately if someone is hurting an animal.